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SUBJECT: DARFUR: PROTESTS LEAD TO VIOLENCE AS N. DARFUR GOVERNOR  
LEADS CHARGE AGAINST UNSCR 1706

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (SBU) The Governor of North Darfur state led a peaceful demonstration against UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1706 on September 2. In prepared remarks, he called for "jihad" against any "foreign invaders" and urged the Government of National Unity (GNU) to support all efforts to resist an expanded UN presence. He warned the U.S. and UK - whose flags were burned - that the introduction of UN peacekeepers would lead to "grave consequences." The rally concluded with a procession to the UN compound, where a letter spelling out the Governor's demands was presented to the Head of Office. In a separate confrontation, two persons were killed, twelve injured, and forty detained when students in favor of UN intervention clashed with police. The Governor's statements represent a disturbing trend and constitute the crossing of a number of noteworthy tripwires. End summary.

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FIERY FLAGS AND RHETORIC AGAINST "FOREIGN INVADERS"  
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¶2. (SBU) According to UN and AMIS sources, in response to the August 31 passage of UNSCR 1706, government officials in North Darfur state organized a September 2 demonstration in El Fasher to protest the introduction of UN peacekeepers. The Governor of North Darfur, Othman Mohammed Yousif Kibir, led the rally. An estimated three to four thousand individuals attended the demonstration, including students of all ages, government employees, teachers, union members, religious and community leaders, and local tribal/government officials. (Comment: As in previous National Congress Party (NCP)-sponsored demonstrations in El Fasher, it appears there were organized efforts to recruit attendance at the demonstration. It is not known, however, whether rumors of students being paid to demonstrate are valid. Despite claims by official speakers at the rally, several participants in the demonstration affirm that there were few, if any, internally displaced persons (IDPs) represented in the gathering. End Comment.)

¶3. (SBU) The Governor, dressed in military uniform and sporting the red ribbon of "Dababeen" (fighters willing to die for religious causes), proclaimed the outright rejection of UNSCR 1706 by all Darfurians. He affirmed Sudan's ability and willingness to confront any "foreign invaders" that would undermine the unity and sovereignty of the country. The Governor said the GNU is pressing ahead in the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and in realizing the aspirations of the people of Darfur. He held that UNSCR 1706 was "unfair" and would only serve to further destabilize Darfur.

¶4. (SBU) The Governor strongly denounced the introduction of "international" forces to Darfur. He warned the world community, with particular emphasis on the U.S. and UK, that such a move would

only invite additional bloodshed and war in the region. Prior to the Governor's remarks, U.S. and UK flags were burned to cheers and chanting of national slogans. The Governor declared the solidarity of the NCP, the National Security Council, the Legislative Council, and local tribal/government officials, in rejecting the UN resolution, and offered his appreciation for the attendance and tangible support of Badawi Al Khair Idriss, GNU representative and head of the NCP delegation to El Fasher. (Comment: Idriss made only brief remarks at the outset of the rally, which began near the Governor's office. He urged support for the Governor and labeled the gathering a "demonstration of anger." End Comment.)

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GOVERNOR'S CALL FOR JIHAD AND MARCH ON UNMIS  
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¶5. (SBU) The Governor continued his inflammatory remarks in avowing all Darfurians' willingness to fight the "colonizers," particularly the U.S and UK, who co-sponsored the UN resolution. He called on the crowd to participate and support a jihad against any "foreign intervention," the outcome of which would only lead to "grave consequences" for the foreigners. In reaffirming the absolute integrity and sovereignty of the Sudanese state, the Governor proffered a seven-point declaration:

- The absolute refusal of UNSCR 1706;
- The complete refusal of any negotiations concerning the issue;
- A declaration of "jihad" against UN peacekeeping troops and "international forces;"
- The opening of all military training centers for those interested in receiving military training to fight "international forces;"

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- A call on all Muslims, religious men, and students in religious schools, to ask for God's support in defeating the invaders;
- A demand to avail Sudan's human resources and funds to support jihad; and
- Activation of emergency rules to protect the country and the state from foreign agents.

¶6. (SBU) In concluding the demonstration, the Governor appealed to the crowd to march to the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) compound to deliver a letter containing the points in para 5. The crowd moved peacefully from downtown El Fasher to the UN compound, where the letter was delivered to Head of Office Niels Scott and a UN security representative. To publicize their message, government officials orchestrated local media coverage of the day's events, including delivery of the letter to the UN. (Note: National television channels covered the story and broadcast images from the demonstration on the evening of September 2. End Note.)

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GNU MILITARY AND POLICE FLEX THEIR MUSCLE  
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¶7. (SBU) Backing up the tough talk, GNU military and police units flexed their muscle on September 3 in a large-scale military parade through El Fasher town and its outskirts. One convoy included more than eighty technical Land Cruisers mounted with multiple-rocket launchers, anti-aircraft weapons, and heavy machine guns moving north past the Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE) compound in the direction of Abu Shouk IDP camp. The ground element procession was supported by MI-24 HIND attack helicopters, which carried out multiple passes over El Fasher and its outskirts from 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

¶8. (SBU) On September 2, tensions also flared between SLA-Minawi party members and GNU national security officers, who demanded Minawi's people cease displaying signs that proclaimed support for a UN force. Unconfirmed accounts suggest that fighting nearly broke

out between the two sides before Head of National Security General Hassan Mostafa intervened to resolve the confrontation.

¶9. (SBU) Also on September 3, El Fasher University students protesting against the GNU and its position on UN transition clashed with police, who reportedly shot and killed one person and injured an additional five. Unconfirmed accounts describe fifteen minutes of looting and opposing student demonstrations - one in favor of the government and the other opposed to it - engaging in a hostile confrontation, at which point GNU riot police were dispatched to control the situation. UN sources later confirmed that two persons were killed (one of the injured having died overnight), twelve were injured, and forty were detained. The specific circumstances leading to the violence are yet to be independently verified.

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TRIPWIRES  
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¶10. (SBU) The Governor's statements on behalf of the GNU represent a disturbing trend and merit close attention. With this event, a number of noteworthy tripwires have either been approached or outright crossed, to include those cited below. Post continues to review and update contingency planning for personnel under Chief of Mission authority based in Darfur. Mission response will be discussed in greater detail septel.

-- Initiation of Government-sponsored demonstrations wherein Government leaders actively participate;

-- Initiation of Government-sponsored demonstrations calling for violence against the international presence, to include the burning of U.S. and UK flags;

-- Popular expressions of discontent against the Government's position on UN intervention in Darfur;

-- Use of force to contain popular expressions of discontent; and

-- Non-renewal of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) September 30.

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COMMENT  
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¶11. (SBU) The Governor has consistently rejected the necessity of UN peacekeepers in Darfur, making note of this position both publicly

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and privately, including in a meeting August 22 with the CDA and a U.S. Congressional Delegation. His most recent public remarks, however, indicate an up-tick in rhetoric, particularly in calling for jihad against "colonizers" and in allowing the burning of the U.S. and UK flags. There are reports that many of the demonstrators were either paid to attend or participated only reluctantly, as we believe the vast majority of Darfurians support a UN PKO. Notwithstanding the fact that the Governor is a genuine Darfurian of non-Arab lineage (Berti tribe), rumors have been swirling for months that he may lose his position as Governor in the power-sharing arrangements mandated under the DPA. Perhaps for this reason, he has opted to take a hard-line position on the UNSCR, hoping that his loyalty to the NCP will reap benefits in the coming months should he find himself ousted in North Darfur.

¶12. (SBU) Comment continued: The political divisions between the GNU and SLA-Minawi that have been evident in Khartoum on the specific issue of UN peacekeepers are becoming more pronounced on the ground in Darfur. Minawi forces and GNU military troops in Darfur maintain a healthy and respectful separation. However, the passage of UNSCR 1706 and the question of demonstrating public support (SLA-Minawi) or opposition (GNU) to it, could undermine that respectful separation and heighten tensions between the two groups, as well as other constituencies (like students), leading to potentially violent consequences. End comment.

